



Athlete Profile (Local)

Christopher Hintzman – Always Looking for Something New



Christopher Hintzman, 26, a U.S. Navy veteran from New Richmond, Wisconsin, is a veteran of both Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom, having served his country in both Iraq and Afghanistan. He is also a second year competitor in the National Veterans Wheelchair Games, and eagerly looks forward to competing in the event this year. Friends and family are coming from as far away as Florida to help cheer him on.

A paraplegic since a 2004 car accident, Hintzman credits his family for being a tremendous support system. "My family got me out into the world right away," he says. "They wouldn't let me feel sorry for myself and had me hunting and fishing with them as soon as I could. I never look back, and I am always looking for new ways of doing the things I have always done. That's the only difference now – I still do the same things I used to do, but it just takes a little bit of adjustment."

Last year was Hintzman's first year participating in the Wheelchair Games, an activity suggested by his therapist at the VA Medical Center in Milwaukee and also encouraged by his fellow members of the Wisconsin Chapter of the Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA). "I have been an athlete (in hockey, baseball and football) my whole life, so it was nice to still be able to compete," he says. "I especially enjoyed the closing banquet last year [at the Games] in Anchorage, where I could share memories with my team. It was fun talking about the week and how everyone did during the competition." In addition to the camaraderie of the event, Hintzman enjoys seeing the techniques the other athletes use to compete in sports. This year, he is competing in archery, swimming and the wheelchair slalom. He is also taking part in the trap shooting and curling exhibition events.

Hintzman attends college at Wisconsin Indianhead Technical College, where he is studying computer assisted design programs and hopes to work on designing houses and other buildings. In his spare time, he is an avid outdoorsman and enjoys going fishing and hunting as often as possible. He encourages anyone experiencing a change in their abilities to get out and try different things, like sports. "I am really glad to have the opportunity to compete in the Games and meet new people," he says. "I am the only guy in a wheelchair that I know of in my small town, so this is a chance to see how other people handle the challenges we face."